

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 34-36 are presented for consideration. Claims 34 and 36 are independent. Claims 1, 3, 5-8, 13-15 and 17-25 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added.

Claims 17-22, withdrawn from consideration as being directed to non-elected inventions, have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, in order to expedite allowance of this application. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications directed to the subject matter of these claims.

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claim 15 was objected to due to a minor informality. This claim having been canceled, this objection has become moot and should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 14, 15 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,905,041 to Aketagawa. Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Aketagawa patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,420,877 to Sandstrom. Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Aketagawa in view of PCT publication number WO 86/00427 to Bruning et al. Claims 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Aketagawa patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,434,173 to Tuganov et al. Applicants submit that the cited art, whether taken

individually or in combination, does not teach many features of the present invention, as previously recited in independent claims 1, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 34 and 36. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

Nevertheless, to expedite allowance of this application, claims 1, 3, 5-8, 13-15 and 23-25 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuing application directed to the subject matter of these claims.

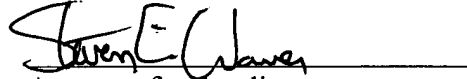
Applicants note with appreciation that claims 34-36 have been indicated as being allowable over the cited art. All pending claims being allowable, Applicants submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Applicants request the Examiner to contact their undersigned representative should any matters be deemed outstanding, precluding allowance of this application.

For the reasons noted above, Applicants further submit that this Amendment After Final Rejection clearly places this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicants believed that the prior Amendment placed the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the instant Amendment, as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is requested under 37 CFR 1.116.

Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections is set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are also requested.

Applicants' attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

Attorney for Applicants
Steven E. Warner
Registration No. 33,326

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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